



October 16, 2013

Dear Burlington City Council Members,

I am writing you on behalf of community leaders who have banded together as volunteers to establish GENERATOR, a non-profit community maker space. We hope to make the Annex of Memorial Auditorium our first home, a plan endorsed by CEDO, Parks & Recreation, and BCA.

In order to do this, a zoning change is required for Memorial Auditorium to allow for the type of activities we contemplate. We have shepherded this zoning change through two regular Planning Commission meetings where it has been unanimously endorsed and warmly received during public comment by at least a half dozen participants. There were no negative comments. The proposal was subsequently heard by the Ordinance Committee in early October. While the amendment currently is the law, final approval of the amendment will come before the Council at your November 4 meeting. A copy of the original zoning change request is included with this communication.

What's a maker space? What kinds of activities go on?

The attachments below provide a short answer and will be included in your printed packet, but for your convenience, we refer you as well to online sources that discuss the highly successful Artisan's Asylum, a maker space in Somerville, Mass and the model early on for our own efforts. We have made numerous site visits, and brought the founder to Burlington to consult. In a day-long exchange, he toured potential locations and addressed representatives from CEDO, UVM, IBM, BCA, Champlain College, state economic development and education folks, community leaders, and local philanthropists.

Here's a short video from The Economist on economic development that features Artisan.
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/babbage/2013/08/community-start-ups>

Their website shows an emphasis on education: http://artisansasylum.com/?page_id=215

We are working on our business plan based on a careful study of the demographics in Burlington and the specific needs of our maker community. Our goal is to operate off of earned income and to use our fundraising efforts for scholarship, capital improvements, and expansion. As for our partners, UVM, Champlain College, Burlington College, BCA, Parks and Recreation, and Burlington Telecom have joined our effort and made verbal commitments to provide funding, technical assistance, and/or community education through Generator.

Attached is a thumbnail look at Generator and its governing team, a blueprint in progress for our layout of the Annex space, and a copy of the zoning request that will come before the commission.

Thanks for your time on this and, we hope, your enthusiasm! We think it's a great thing for Burlington and we're committed to doing it right. If you have any questions, please be in touch now or later, and look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Michael Metz,
on behalf of The Generator Team
802 598 6982

Incase you did not know, Generator—Burlington's new Makerspace—is a combination of artist studio, classroom, and business incubator focused on the act of making things. If all goes according to plan, Generator will open its doors spring 2014 in the Annex of Memorial Auditorium.

Makers of all kinds— artists, artisans, entrepreneurs, and weekend tinkerers — are invited to sign-up for membership, rent a studio space, or take a class.

>>**Makerspaces are . . .**

A unique combination of artist studio, shop class and business incubator focused on the act of making things. Evolved from the DIY culture and fueled by the free flow of information in the digital age, the maker movement has blossomed with makerspaces being increasingly in demand.

>>**Hotbeds of Innovation**

Makerspaces exist at the intersection of art, science and technology and as such create communities of collaboration between artists, engineers, entrepreneurs and artisans. This hybrid hive of activity creates a fertile environment for innovation, creativity and idea fulfillment.

>>**Emphasis on Education**

Makerspaces offer a diverse range of classes to both members and the community-at-large. In addition they foster the informal sharing of expertise on both individual and collaborative projects.

>>**Tools, Studios, Classes and Cultural Programming**

In addition to classes, makerspaces offer: small inexpensive studios for rent; a range of shared tools from 3D printers and electronics fabrication, to traditional metal and wood shop tools; as well as technology and innovation-focused cultural programming

>>**Based Upon Successful Model**

Generator's concept is based upon the highly successful Somerville, MA makerspace, Artisan's Asylum. After two expansions it now occupies 45,000 sq ft, has 250+ members and offers 20+ classes per month. Founder Gui Cavalcanti is consulting on Generator's project plan.

>>**New Business Creation**

Somerville's local government credits Artisan's Asylum with doubling the city's number of light fabrication companies within its three years of operation at its current location. Artisan's Asylum is also home to millions in Kickstarter dollars including a \$1.8 million investment in a 3D pen.

>>**Downtown Location**

The central location of Memorial's Annex is ideally suited to Generator's goals of community outreach and accessibility for classes. Its proximity to the Fletcher Free Library is also ideal; as many libraries nationwide seek to establish makerspaces as extensions of their educational missions. Finally, thanks to Burlington Telecom's investment in improved Internet delivery, the Annex space will allow Generator to provide its patrons with highly desirable and unparalleled computing power— exciting news for makers in the digital arts.

Generator will be a bustling hotbed of community activity and innovation. Launching and supporting this space requires investment – both in dollars and in effort. We are looking to you to help us spread the word and send interested parties our way! In addition, we are seeking grant funding and would welcome any help in identifying grants that might fit our mission. If you or someone you know may be interested in this opportunity, please contact generatorvermont@gmail.com.

Thank you for helping lead the way in this promising new venture! Stay tuned for more updates! For more information about Generator please visit: www.generatorvermont.com

>> Generator Team

John Cohn is a fellow at IBM, Essex Junction, a founding member of the Vermont Makers, on the Board of Directors at the Echo Center, and all-around mad scientist, self-described but only because he beat us to it.

Dan Harvey is the Assistant Dean at the University of Vermont's Graduate College as well as Business Operations Manager for the Office of the Vice President for Research. Prior to arriving at UVM in 2005, Dan was the General Manager of VPT, Vermont's public television network. He has been on the Burlington City Arts advisory board for eleven years, serving as president from 2004-2013

Ken Howell is a professor in Champlain College's Division of Communication & Creative Media, a founding member of the Vermont Makers, an organizer of the Champlain Maker Faire, and artist. His longstanding interest in work that happens at the intersection of art, technology, and communication has informed most of his activities including the recent genesis and launch of maker space at Champlain College's Miller Center building.

Doreen Kraft is the long-time Executive Director of Burlington City Arts and has overseen its impressive growth over the last xx years. Doreen's ability to shepherd projects through City process has resulted in increases in programs, staff, budget, and in the creation of studio and gallery space including the nationally-recognized, historically-preserved BCA Center.

Michael Metz is a materials scientist, a business consultant in precious metals technology, a photographer, and an active board member of BCA, The BCA Foundation, Champlain College, and the Vermont Community Foundation. He has extensive non-profit development experience, served as the chair of two successful multimillion-dollar capital campaigns, and has a long-standing interest in art, education and technology.

Christy Mitchell is an entrepreneur with over ten years of creative facilitation and arts management experience. She has reclaimed four industrial spaces in Burlington for working artists, and oversees, at present, over thirty studios with another eight in development, and two galleries including S.P.A.C.E. She also serves as associate director of the South End Arts and Business Association.

Denise Shekerjian is an attorney and writer with a long-time interest in the creative process. She is the author of *Uncommon Genius*, a look at creativity based on a group of MacArthur Prize winners. She is also the author of literary essays and a blog, and has experimental work in progress. She is a longtime supporter of arts and education, and has longstanding friendships with BCA and Champlain College.

Chris Thompson is an artist and maker focused on art and technology with 20 years of experience in corporate technology management, and four years as the curator at the BCA center where he organized over 30 exhibitions. Chris is also a member of Vermont Makers and is involved in the creation of maker space at Champlain College including the development of curriculum.

Doug Webster is the Career and Technical Education Coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Education as well as an active participant of CMF Innovations, which promotes maker activities nationally. He has also produced and hosted an educational show on the culture of innovation, and is President of the National Association for Workforce Improvement, which focuses on innovation education.

>> Key Employees:

Jen Adrian is a graphic designer with close to twenty years in the field of design and marketing. She splits her time between the Emergent Media Center at Champlain College as a Creative Project Manager and principal of Jen Adrian Design. A recent groupie to the local Vermont Maker scene and one of the facilitators of the Champlain College Makers Lab.

Rob Rock-TBD

